

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11

SAJ-01 EB-07 BIB-01 /079 W

----- 001756

R 091450Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6751

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SW

SUBJECT: OPINION POLL SHOWS COMMUNISTS BELOW MINIMUM LEVEL FOR
PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION

REF: STOCKHOLM 0322

1. RESULTS OF A PUBLIC OPINION POLL ON POLITICAL PARTY
PREFERENCES, RELEASED FEBRUARY 8, SHOW THE COMMUNIST PARTY
(VPK) POLLING ONLY 3.5 PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE, LESS
THAN THE FOUR PERCENT NECESSARY FOR REPRESENTATION IN
THE SWEDISH PARLIAMENT (RIKSDAG). LOSS OF RIKSDAG
REPRESENTATION FOR THE VPK IN THE ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR
NEXT SEPTEMBER COULD BE CRUCIAL FOR THE RULING SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC PARTY, WHICH NOW GOVERNS WITH THE SUPPORT OF
THE 19 SEATS WHICH VPK GARNERED IN THE 1973 ELECTIONS.
THE VPK LOSSES APPARENTLY REFLECT VOTER DISILLUSIONMENT
WITH THE OPEN FIGHTING WITH THE PARTY BETWEEN THE PARTY
LEADERSHIP AND THE "STALINISTS", LOCATED PRIMARILY IN NORTHERN
SWEDEN.

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2. THE POLL -- CARRIED OUT BY THE PRESTIGIOUS SWEDISH

INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH -- ALSO REVEALED A THREE PERCENT RISE FOR THE OPPOSITION LIBERAL PARTY FROM ITS STANDING OF LAST NOVEMBER, TO A TOTAL OF 11 PERCENT, AND DROPS OF TWO PERCENT (TO 21 PERCENT) AND ONE PERCENT (TO 17.5 PERCENT) FOR THE CENTER AND MODERATE PARTIES, RESPECTIVELY. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC STANDING WAS SET AT 44 PERCENT, UP ONE PERCENT FROM DECEMBER. AS IN DECEMBER, THE POLLS CONTINUE TO SHOW A SLIGHT EDGE FOR THE THREE OPPOSITION PARTIES OF A TOTAL STRENGTH OF ALMOST 50 PERCENT VERSUS 47.5 PERCENT FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND COMMUNISTS COMBINED.

3. THE RISE IN THE STANDING OF THE LIBERAL PARTY IS ASCRIBED BY POLITICAL OBSERVERS TO THE ELECTION LAST FALL OF THE YOUTHFUL AND DYNAMIC PER AHLMARK TO THE POST OF PARTY LEADER. HOWEVER, THE LIBERAL PARTY GAINS HAVE COME AT THE EXPENSE OF THE OTHER TWO OPPOSITION PARTIES AND PARTICULARLY FROM THE CENTER PARTY, RATHER THAN FROM THE SOCIALIST CAMP. THE DECLINE IN THE STANDING OF THE CENTER PARTY REFLECTS THE FADING IMAGE OF PARTY LEADER THORBJORN FALLDIN, WHOSE CAMPAIGN AGAINST NUCLEAR POWER HAS SO FAR FAILED TO CAPTURE WIDESPREAD SUPPORT WITH A PUBLIC APPARENTLY MORE CONCERNED ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT THAN ABOUT THE THREAT TO THE ENVIRONMENT POSED BY NUCLEAR POWER.

4. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC POLITICIANS INDICATE SATISFACTION WITH THEIR PARTY'S STANDING IN THE POLLS, POINT OUT THAT THE 44 PERCENT FIGURE IS SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE PARTY'S PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE IN THE SEPTEMBER 1973 ELECTIONS. WITH STILL SEVEN MONTHS TO GO BEFORE THE NEXT ELECTIONS, THEY EXPRESS CONFIDENCE THAT ONCE THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN MOVES INTO FULL SWING, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO MOBILIZE THEIR VAST PARTY AND TRADE UNION APPARATUS TO GARNER AN EVEN HIGHER FIGURE. HOWEVER, THE SPECTRE OF A VPK DISAPPEARANCE FROM THE RIKSDAG, POSED BY THE PROSPECT OF A FALL BELOW THE MINIMUM FOUR PERCENT LEVEL, IS UNDOUBTEDLY WORRYING TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP SINCE, WITHOUT VPK SUPPORT, IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY UNLIKELY THAT THE PARTY COULD WIN A MAJORITY OF THE POPULAR VOTE ON ITS OWN.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION FORECASTS, NATIONAL ELECTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STOCKH00700
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760050-0250
From: STOCKHOLM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760266/aaaacgig.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STOCKHOLM 322
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <15 APR 2004 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OPINION POLL SHOWS COMMUNISTS BELOW MINIMUM LEVEL FOR PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION
TAGS: PINT, SW
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006